1: Glacken E-5 (1951-1952) 1953 AC7 Okinawa AC7

Daily Life of the Fishing Village

Fishing families may have informal gatherings toward the end of the day. On a late summer afternoon, the family may sit in the open doorway of the house, for hedges, fences, the barriers, and trees are rare. The wife may be nursing her naked child. Her husband, a fisherman, has changed into his indigo blue and white striped kimono, a tall, broad, deeply tanned man. Next to him sits his mother, over 70 years old, her hands tattooed, as are those of all the old women. She is wearing a kimono of the same color, but of a dot pattern. They sit on unrolled mats. On the veranda, three or four men, unwashed and still in their work clothes, discuss the events of the day. A lacquer tray with tea cups is on the floor near them and the tea (as it so often is) may be cold. There is brown sugar to eat along with the tea. The grandmother may be economically smoking a half or a third of a cigarette in the typical Japanese pipe. As it grows later, the wife gets up, pours some water in the stone mortar, and smashes the sweet potatoes with the long wooden pole. The men continue talking for a while, then take their leave. The wife, her work at the mortar finished, goes into the dirt kitchen to start the evening meal.

The wife of the fisherman has worries that do not bother the farmer's wife. There is always the danger that her husband, or son, will not return, a real possibility, of which the frequency of widowhood in Minatogawa is proof. Every season, there is at least one instance of a fisherman who has either been lost, or whose delay in returning has provoked intense worry. If crews are still out when an unexpected storm arises, there is considerable tension in the village. Since the war, rescues at sea are more likely than before. The village headman quickly reports overdue boats. The American forces have created much good will in seeking fishermen lost at sea.

Woman, on the other hand, have opportunities for leisure when the catch is light, or weather is unfavorable. At these times, they can busy themselves with other tasks, in the field, gathering stones, getting miscanthus, but they do not have the unremitting activity of the woman in the agricultural village. There is more visiting during the day than one observes in an agricultural village.

The fisherman, with or without land, tries to keep pigs and perhaps a few goats. In Minatogawa, the pens are often made of sandstone quarried here. Not only the floors and the sides, but the stalls are made of this material. One reason for this is the openness of the village and the danger that pigs will be killed in a storm. A typhoon may carry away the house, its owners having gone to the stronger house of a friend or relative, but pigs are an investment and an asset to be guarded.

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a harsh, often rasping voice. Only men play the Okinawan samisen, a stringed instrument slightly different from its Japanese counterpart. Men also join in the dancing.

In a village parties on the fifth or sixth day after the birth of a child and on his first birthday happen frequently. They are an important part of social life. A relative or a friend is always celebrating one or the other occasion, either in the village or in a neighboring one. These celebrations increase, especially for the men, the number of social occasions and recreational opportunities during the year in a culture where holidays and rest days are comparatively few. (There are no weekly rest days or week ends).

861 After the first birthday, little attention is paid to the succeeding ones until the thirteenth. The child's experience from the time he begins to walk until he reaches school comes from family life and neighborhood play. In my observation, there is no rigid, customary way of bringing up the child. It is toilet trained around 863 one year of age. This does not seem to be forced. Training comes through imitation. Parents do not punish the child for indiscretions, though they are quick to lift him off the mat if he begins wetting. With young boys, the father may make a hissing sound while the child's penis is out. One has the impression that it is a gradual transition, mostly effected by imitation or gentle suasion.

●304 Male children are not circumcised. Circumcision is known only to those who have learned of it through books, foreign residence, or from others who have this information.[9]

867 In early training, boys are not taught that they are superior to girls. But when she reaches school age, the girl is likely to be kept 562 busier around the house. Before the war, there may have been a greater subordination of girls to boys. But any conscious training of girls to subordinate themselves to boys is unnecessary. The child grows up in a culture in which the father is waited on, the sons favored in inheritance, and in which the men have a richer social life.

855 Parents are kind to their children. They seldom spank a child, 593 though an exasperated parent may give the child a sharp slap. There is little nagging or shouting at children in anger. In my opinion,

9 Two young men, school teachers about 23 years old, expressed great astonishment when asked about circumcision. They did not know it existed.

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The native medicine, including the use of plants and fish as medicines, the native doctor, the use of cauterization, the golden needle, slashing, and acupuncture, seem to be disappearing in favor of modern patent medicines and drugs, and scientific medicine, nursing, and midwifery. Of all the traditional practices (ultimately derived from China), slashing and burning with moguse seem to have the greatest vitality.

10

Tattooing

Tattooing (ireizumi)in Japanese, dake in Okinawan) is a subject of great historical interest in the Ryukyu chain. In Okinawa, it exists now only among elderly women (in the late sixties and seventies), as it was forbidden by law when the Japanese annexed the islands. Tattooing usually was done on the back of the hands, including the fingers, parts of the wrist, and the knuckles. The design was put on by spreading India ink (often with sake or awamori added) on the surface, pricking out the design and wiping off the surplus, repeating the operation for the lighter parts. To my knowledge, there was no facial tattooing.

Until quite recently tattooing was practiced on men as well. Basil Hall in 1816 wrote of a landing in the south of Okinawa island. "Most of these people had fish spears tatooed on their arms in the form of a trident, with rude barbs." On the right arm it was called (in Hall's transcription) "oodeemaw," and on the left, "tooga." Apparently this was confined to fishermen. Furness in his account of the Luchus (1899) observed such markings among young and mature men in Itoman. The explanation given him was that they were a protection against evil spirits. Furness also discussed the theory that tattooing was historically connected with weaving. Simon, in an interesting speculative discussion, based on the designs of cloth in Miyako and their correspondence with house or family markings thought that the tattooing was a means of identifying women's membership in a family.7

This interesting idea unfortunately did not occur to me while in the villages, but the notion that tattooing may have been related

7 Hall's Voyage, as cited, Vocabulary (no pagination). Hall includes sketches of the marks. Furness, Life in the Luchu islands, as cited, 9. See also Simon's extremely interesting discussion, Beitrage zur Kenntnis der Riukiu-Inseln, as cited, 134-150. Furness and Simon are especially valuable because they personally observed instances of tattooing at a time when it was much more commonly seen. Both authors reproduce patterns which show differences among the islands and among individuals.

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to the family system, the extended family, or to the household order naming system is well worth exploring. No tattooing was observed among the Itinatogawa fishermen, but this may have been an oversight. According to an old woman there, it did exist. One would expect it from the close relationship of Itinatogawa to Itoman. It is quite probable, in my opinion, that tattooing of men and women have different origins.

According to the early observers, tattooing of women took place around puberty, although Furness puts the age at 4 or 5 years. Patterns differed distinctly by island.

In Okinawa, everywhere one hears the same explanation for the origin of women's tattooing. Although there are variants, the core of the explanation is that the Ryukyu islanders (presumably after the Satsuma conquest of 1609) tattooed their young girls to prevent their being carried off to brothels in Japan. The tattooing was supposed to have made the girls so unattractive that they were untouched. Other variations are that the tattoo indicated marriage and thus kept the girl from being taken away. An old woman of Itinatogawa told of a legend (not seen or heard from any other source) in which the tattooing of women was an act of thanksgiving for a rescue at sea. A boat was sinking, and the survivors swimming saw two hands in the sky. They stopped the waves and the storm passed, permitting the swimmers to reach shore easily. The families were told, and after that the hands of the women were tattooed.

This subject needs considerable research. It would be of great interest to know the relationship, if any, to the family system, the extended family, and the household order naming system, whether it is comparatively recent in the islands, and whether the tattooing of the fisherman is a result of Chinese or Portugese influences and a consequence of the early Pacific trade described in Chapter II.

11

Knuckle Cracking

One of the most puzzling of Okinawan mannerisms is the frequency of knuckle cracking. It may be observed in young children from 5 to 6 to old men and women in their seventies. It is done on so many occasions that cataloging them would be a real chore. The knuckle is cracked crisply and sharply. Young boys and girls may talk a whole evening, cracking their knuckles incessantly. It occurs in ordinary conversation, at lively parties, and during periods when a conversation lags. Children say they learned it from their mothers.

It seems a habit acquired very early. Perhaps it is an indication of tension, but I am inclined to be less specific. One Okinawan explained it as a continuation of childhood habit and ascribed it to the limberness of the fingers coming from early training on the abacus,

and women. Two informants who had lived in Japan denied having ever heard of public baths with mixed bathing. Okinawans have occasionally been shocked by seeing Americans nude. Okinawans feel that not only should the lower part of the torso be covered for the sake of modesty but the upper part also should be covered, if one is out of doors, for reasons of health; the sun's rays are harmful if too strong. Modesty may even reach proportions uncommon in the West; one young man told Lebra that he does not enjoy going swimming because he believes he is too hairy. The same young man told how he and other boys, when in high school, used to peep through a crack in the bathhouse wall in order to see the women bathing on the other side, until they were chased away by the proprietor. This hardly suggests the casual attitude toward nudity reported for the Japanese. 291 834 [515] [826]

Body Ornamentation. The Okinawans seem never to have practiced any sort of body mutilation---such as the Chinese foot-binding. However, women were tattooed on the wrists and backs of the hands until early in this century. Most women over 50 have tattooed hands. There are several stories told that purport to explain the origin of the practice---that it was to prevent Okinawan women from being kidnapped, for example---but these stories are of doubtful value. The designs have names but evidently no meaning; one old woman said that they varied with the tattoo artist, who put on whatever he wanted. Tattooing was done before puberty and marriage. It may have originally been part of a puberty rite. 178 304

Many people of both sexes between the ages of 20 and 40 have elaborate gold and silver work on their teeth. In many cases the work does not consist of fillings or bridges but of thin caps put over sound teeth for purely ornamental reasons. These can be removed without harming the teeth. People are said to be having this sort of work done today, but in time the value Americans and present-day Japanese put on "natural-looking" teeth may win out over the urge to ornament the mouth. Of course there is also a great deal genuine dental work done because of tooth decay. 301 [77]

At present American values and modern Japanese values in feminine beauty are being spread by the beauty parlor. For several years the permanent wave has been popular though perhaps not well suited to Mongoloid hair. And recently a number of young women are said to have added padded brassieres to their equipment. 177 832 [305] [302] [29]

Elimination. Urination and defecation are regarded differently. Urination in public is permissible for males, if they turn away. I have seen a dignified old gentleman talking over his shoulder to a young woman while he urinated into the ditch. Women may also urinate in public, though they do so less frequently. Defecation in public is not usual; even children are scolded for it though they may occasionally do it. Feces ought to go in the proper place; one reason for using the toilet may be that the "night-soil" is used as fertilizer. 514 [863] [241]

The Okinawan term kusu is used rather more freely than its Japanese cognate, though the uses are parallel. Alone it means "feces", human or animal. It is the usual word for animal manure. In compounds it may mean 192

period of time. This was usually accomplished by reciprocal labor exchange or by hiring the local youth organization to do the job. 178 406

In sum, the rural people are making eager use of labor-saving machines when they are available. The limiting factors have been shortage caused by the war, poverty, small fields, and heavily fragmented holdings. The use of machines has contributed to a decline of reciprocal labor exchanges and has necessitated the payment of cash for the services of the specialist or machine owner. 178 40 [476] [437]

Dress A most notable feature of the postwar period has been the wholesale adoption of Western styles of dress and the great reliance placed on Japanese and American cloth and clothing. Nearly all males now dress in Western styles of dress. Very infrequently an old man will be observed in a kimono, but most males regard it as ill suited for work and modern life. Sometimes a man will wear a kimono when lounging at home, especially late in the evening after supper and bath. It is not at all unusual in the cities and towns to see a man walking toward the public bath carrying his kimono; on return he is dressed in the kimono and carries his soiled work clothing which is of Western style. Even for weddings the Western suit is used as frequently as the kimono for the groom's attire. 177 291

Young women and school girls wear Western dress exclusively. The kimono still remains the traditional mode of dress for the bride, and at New Year's time young women and girls may wear kimono. Middle-aged women use the kimono and Western-style dresses about equally. The older women dress exclusively in the kimono. The style of the kimono for the older and middle-aged woman is usually Okinawan, not Japanese. Among the young women and girls who use the kimono only as a party costume the Japanese style is followed, never the Okinawan. [292]

Native-style rain and sun hats of palm leaf and wheat straw are still widely used in the rural areas; nothing of Western or Japanese manufacture has been able to match these for light weight and effectiveness. 178 292

A major influence on Okinawan styles of dress has been the clothing of the US military forces. This has been obtained through clothes rations, surpluses, and petty black market operations. US Army fatigues, chino pants and shirts, wool pants, field jackets, fatigue caps and ponchos, are very popular particularly in the rural areas, so much so that the bulk of rural Okinawa is dressed in colors of olive drab, suntan, or field green. All attest to the durability of American cloth. A number of Okinawans asserted that used American clothing was better than new Japanese. A number of small merchants capitalizing on this belief have begun importing used American clothing, which comes in one-hundred pound bales; according to all accounts this has been well received. 291 177 [439]

Okinawans use very little in the way of personal ornamentation. The large old-fashioned hairpin, formerly worn by both sexes, is used today by only a few old women. Tattooed hands, once common to all Okinawan women, are seen today only on women over sixty. The purely ornamental insertion of gold teeth is also said to be declining; among the young educated (high school) people of the cities there is said to be some reaction against this use of gold teeth, but personal observation indicates continued popularity of the custom in the country. 301 178 [304]